GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:6
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2003
THEFT OF ANTIQUES
LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY;RADHA MOHAN SINGH

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of cases of theft/smuggling of antique items from National Museum and other places in the country have been reported recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to prevent theft/smuggling of religious statues and other artefacts; and

(d) if so, the details of the said scheme ?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM & CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN)

(a) to (d) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.6 FOR 21.7 BY SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH AND DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA REGARDING `THEFT OF ANTIQUES`

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Recently the theft of a pistol from National Museum, New Delhi has been reported and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has reported recent thefts of 4 items from the protected monuments/sites, as given in the Annexure - I to this statement. In all these cases First Information Reports (FIRs) have been lodged with the Police authorities for investigation. Recently, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has also registered two cases relating to theft/smuggling of antique items as per Annexure - II. Besides, various state governments also take action in cases of thefts/smuggling in their respective states.

(c) & (d) In the museums and monuments administered by the government, adequate security measures by way of deployment of security personnel and installing security equipment are provided. The Government has enacted the `Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972` with a view to prevent the smuggling of antiquities and art objects. As per the provisions of this Act, export of antiquities is prohibited. Any export in violation of this Act is an offence for which assistance of Interpol can be obtained. Only the Central Government or an authority or an agency authorised by the Central government may temporarily export any antiquity or art treasure and such export shall be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of a `Temporary Export Permit` issued for the purpose by the Director General, ASI.

Further, under the United Nations `Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit export, Import and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property` assistance of UNESCO can be sought for restitution of the smuggled cultural property of the Nation. India is a signatory to this convention.

ANNEXURE - I

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART(b) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 6 FOR 21.07.2003 BY RADHA MOHAN SINGH AND DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA REGARDING `THEFT OF ANTIQUES`

Sl.No.	Description of Objects	Name of Monuments & Location	Date of Theft	Status
1.	Three Stone sculptures	Kadambarkoil Narthamalai Distt. Pudukkottai,Tamil Nadu	27.01.2003	FIR lodged. Under investigation
2.	Stone Sculpture	Temples of Akona, Distt. Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh	02.02.2003	FIR lodged. Under investigation
3.	i) Head of female			

ii) Icon of Jain Tirthankar Mahavir	Sculpture shed Gyaraspur, Distt. Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh	02.03.2003	FIR lodged.	Under investigation
4. Small stone sculpture of Nandi	Sri Kapoteswara Swamy temple, Guntur Distt. Andhra Pradesh	11/12.03.03	FIR lodged.	Under investigation

ANNEXURE - II

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART(b) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 6 FOR 21.07.2003 BY SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH AND DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA REGARDING `THEFT OF ANTIQUES`

Sl.No.	Description of Objects and crime	Location	Date of Registration of case	Status
1.	Attempt to export 12 Terracotta panels, two stone idols, and two pitchers of terracotta from IGI Airport, Delhi to Zurich, Switzerland	New Delhi	30.01.2003	Accused persons arrested and cases under active investigation
2.	Stocking of 12 stone idols dating back to 10th and 14th Century A.D. in a godown at Mahipalpur, Delhi	New Delhi	30.01.2003	Accused persons arrested and cases under active investigation